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AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY ON THE PROCESS OF CREATING STUDIO WORK  
USING PERSONAL PROPRIOSPECT

by

MARIA TERESA GARCIA

Under the Direction of Melanie Davenport, PhD

ABSTRACT

The intent of this body of work and research is to reveal a process by which I can create work that reflects my point of view and background, or *propriospect*. This process of combining my Hispanic heritage and American upbringing is one I hope to model for my students in the art classroom. I created five works reflecting my personal point of view by combining techniques and styles used in my native Chile with some that I learned as I grew up in the United States. Through this study I determined a process by which my students can create work that is both personally significant and informative to the other students in the classroom.

INDEX WORDS: Sgraffito, Propriospect, Arpilleras, Caring Classroom, Chanchito de la Suerte, Applique, Kuwaii, and Hacienda.

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AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY ON THE PROCESS OF CREATING STUDIO WORK  
USING PERSONAL PROPRIOSPECT

by

MARIA TERESA GARCIAA Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of  
Masters of Art Education  
in the College of Arts and Sciences  
Georgia State University  
2017

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2017

AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY ON THE PROCESS OF CREATING STUDIO WORK  
USING PERSONAL PROPRIOSPECT

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Georgia State University  
May 2017

## **DEDICATION**

I want to dedicate this to my most avid personal supporters: my parents and my husband Michael.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to acknowledge the generous support of my professors, especially my committee chair Dr. Melanie Davenport. Their faith has helped me get this far.

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## LIST OF TERMS

**Sgraffito:** a form of decoration made by scratching through a surface to reveal a lower layer of a contrasting color, typically done in plaster or stucco on walls, or in slip on ceramics before firing.

**Propriospect:** a person's point of view based on their history, culture, and events in their life.

**Arpilleras:** South American cloth quilts depicting pastoral scenes or veiled politically charged messages criticizing the government.

**Caring Classroom:** A environment that promotes the equal voice and teaches empathy as a main feature of the classroom.

**Chanchito de la Suerte:** Three-legged, clay good-luck pigs from Pomaire, Chile.

**Applique:** ornamental needlework in which pieces of fabric are sewn or stuck onto a large piece of fabric to form pictures or pattern.

**Kawaii:** Cute in Japanese.

**Hacienda:** Mansion or Manor house in Spanish.

**Bone Dry:** Completely dry ceramic clay that is ready to be fired.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In my time as a student and teacher I have found that in order for students to have the best learning experience there must be a sense of trust and empathy in the classroom. In recent times we have witnessed through the shooting in Orlando the destructive force hate, misunderstanding, and bullying can have in our society. We can use the art process as a means of self-care and a way to be vulnerable with each other to form a caring classroom. Each student has lived constellation of experiences which gives them a distinct lens through which they participate in and view the world. *Propriospect* is a person's private and subjective view of the world that each human develops out of personal experience (Wolcott, 1991). Part of forming a caring classroom is to help the students value their unique points of view. "In an ethnic consonant environment, a child is more protected from prejudice and discrimination, and has greater opportunities for friendship and social support, whereas in a dissonant context a higher incidence of discrimination and less social support may exist" (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2004, p. 256). Therefore, especially in classrooms with more diverse student populations, developing empathy by learning about each other from each other is essential.

### **Biography & Interest in the Study**

Acknowledging the differences in each student allows for the class to learn about other cultures and their value in society at large. In the art room, students can call upon their *propriospect* to inform their work and use it as platform to understand each other. I planned to create a body of work that explored my own *propriospect* so that I might learn to express my point of view to others. If I could do this, I could learn how to better teach my students how to convey their own *propriospect* to the classroom. I am an immigrant and a Latina who had to learn how to value my point of view and try to relate to others in a positive way. In my education

I was encouraged to conform and discouraged from valuing or expressing the differences I had from my peers. Today there is an emphasis on “celebrating cultural diversity” in the classroom. However, as Downey and Torrecilha (1994) assert, simply addressing cultural diversity [in the classroom] does not automatically foster appreciation and eliminate ethnocentrism. Through this studio-based thesis, I wanted to learn how I could apply my experience and research to improve the climate of acceptance in my own classroom. I have witnessed art educators integrate lessons that explore the different traditions and beliefs of other cultures. For example, at an elementary school in Atlanta, GA there is a series of lessons taught about Dia De Los Muertos during Halloween and others about the Chinese New Year. These lessons touch on how these different celebrations are observed. There is a large Mexican population and a moderate amount of Asian Americans present at the school. However, each project is prescribed and doesn’t draw upon the individual student experiences, even when that students could contribute to the conversation. I wouldn’t want any student to feel singled out in comparison to their peers. I distinctly remember feeling like I wanted to be like everyone else in school. However, there isn’t even an opportunity for the students or other community members to bring the significance of an event home to their classroom.

I often refer to my propriospect to inform my work and I have the opportunity to work in various mediums. I have always loved drawing and when I entered high school I decided to attend a Visual Performing Arts Magnet school. The school was on a block schedule (four class periods per day) and half of the day the students would attend classes in their respective specialties. There I met great teachers and was greatly influenced by the other students' work. I was able to get to know many other minorities and students that were openly LGBTQ. The class sizes were smaller and there was a level of earnestness and commitment to a craft I had not



experienced in school before. After high school I decided to enroll in Ringling College of Art & Design. I liked drawing, painting, sculpture and ceramics a great deal but did not envision myself as a traditional fine artist. At the time I wanted to learn something more practical for the workforce. I decided to pursue graphic design and minor in printmaking. It made sense to me that I could work in an office but still be creative. I learned a lot about design software and how to work in a digital format.

After graduation I found that I was not suited to design as well as I thought. I found a lot of the work tedious and devoid of real artistic innovation. I am a terrible content checker and constantly focused on the design and forgot to double check the content for mistakes. I also found the hours untenable and the constant hunt for contract work stressful to maintain. I loved doing print work but web work was the only thing that paid the bills. I decided to quit it and started to sew and make work on my own while I nannied to pay the bills. I found making toy designs and print freelance suited me better and I loved working with my families. I started teaching my sewing and drawing techniques at Calleanwolde Fine Arts Center and came to love teaching the art process as well. When I entered graduate school for art education I had experience in most mediums at the college level. However, I hadn't had ceramics since high school. I took a hand building class as a refresher course and really enjoyed it. I decided to use my expertise in print design and my renewed love for ceramics as my mediums for the art work I made for my thesis.

In this thesis, I planned to explore techniques to showcase my point of view so that I may get the students to do the same. Stories about culture and experience are more impactful if it comes from someone close to home. It is also an opportunity for students to learn something about each other and form a more trusting and intimate bond. "Empathy is also claimed to be central in

promoting pro-social behavior through increasing positive, helping and thoughtful actions” (Gano-Overway et al. 2009, p. 131). Empathy is sharing the person’s emotional state and the capacity to take on the perspective of another person (Pavlovich & Krahne, 2012).

Paradoxically, when a person can put themselves in the other person’s shoes they can relate back to their own experiences and understand each other better.

When I immigrated to the U.S. I did not speak the language and although I was Christian I was not Protestant (like my peers at my Christian school.) Students and teachers openly condemned Catholics and people of other faiths. There was also an unspoken ambivalence toward minorities. Socially, I was relegated to the misfit group in my school which included other minorities, the disabled, or students that had chronic discipline issues. By force of circumstance I was able to learn about my misfit peers and be more generous in my outlook to anyone that didn’t quite fit in. Having empathy for my friends and even for the peers and teachers that rejected me was something that I learned through that experience. I remember how much I wanted to sound American and how I cringed when I opened my mouth and people would immediately ask me where I was from. Or well-meaning teachers and parents would, upon meeting me, tell me how “exotic” I looked and asked me what planet I came from. I was not, at the time, encouraged by most peers or teachers to celebrate my culture, heritage, or propriospect. Once I became a little more comfortable with myself I was able to talk to people (at least the more benignly discriminatory) about my culture and who I was in a way that they could relate to and understand. I wish I had had the opportunity or the space to talk about my perspective and learn, in turn, about the culture I was trying to acclimate to. I wish I had mentors in older students or the presence of mind to mentor other students in reclaiming their identity and enriching their community with their point of view through their words and their art work.

### **Need for the Study**

When students create art work they are able to mentor other students and share their approach to the art process. When working alongside each other, students begin to acknowledge that other students have different ideas and make sense of the world in unique ways (Kelehear & Heid, 2002). Combating bullying in school by building empathy is important to create better, more caring adults. Espelage and Swearer (2009) found that greater bullying and victimization were associated with fewer positive peer influences and fewer parent-child relationships that were perceived as caring from the students' perspective (Swearer, et., 2010 p. 39). How can we create positive and caring experiences to encourage a classroom experience free of bullying and prejudice? School wide programs to talk about tolerance and anti-bullying have mixed results in effectiveness. Only about 10-20% of the school population engages in bullying (Swearer, 2010, p. 42). I believe that intervention when something is happening is at least one effective way to cut down on a negative school atmosphere. Even if there isn't direct bullying that condemns a certain groups (LGBTQ, disabled, or other vulnerable populations), the behavior of apathetic bystanders and ugly remarks that go unchecked by teachers and students contribute to a culture of intolerance. In the next chapter I will be discussing teaching empathy in the classroom based on the works of Nell Noddings, Carol Gilligan, and Paulo Freire.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to create a body of work based on my particular point of view that includes my identity as a female, Latin-American immigrant. I took five different Chilean artisanal works and reinvented them through an American lens. Each piece reflects styles present in the original works and in techniques I have learned in my time in the United States. I hoped that my process of making the work and my reflections after would provide insights to help me

guide my students through a similar process. I believe students can have a chance to be introspective and create personally resonant work. I hope to give students a chance to share part of who they are with their peers and enrich each other's understanding of diverse culture and experiences; thus having a more empathetic view of each other. Guiding my work will be the following research questions: 1) What can I learn by creating, reflecting and analyzing my process of making personally specific artwork that reflects my personal proporspect? 2) What can I glean that would be helpful to guide my students in creating their own body of work?

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter I will discuss the concept of caring education, creating empathy across social divides of culture and gender. My philosophy in teaching is based in critical pedagogy and caring education. Critical pedagogy was first described by Paulo Freire and was developed by Henry Giroux. Although I initially thought of myself as a progressive, I have since re-examined my position and find that my teaching is rooted in my values. I wanted to empower my students, promote and help facilitate the growth of their personal voice. Giroux states: “Pedagogy is always political because it is connected to the acquisition of agency (Giroux, 2013).”

Reconstructivists (Eisner, for one) believe that institutions like schools shape society. The school can educate to keep up the status quo or to promote change. In the Chilean revolution of 1973, art was used as a tool to popularize political and social ideals. Today, reconstructivists see art education as a vehicle for social change. Reconstructivists believe art education is a resistance to cultural homogenization.

As an immigrant and minority (Hispanic) I am caught between two worlds, one of white privilege because I’m light skinned, and the other as an underprivileged minority because I am Latina. I think this aspect of my life, along with my experiences in immigrating to this country color how I feel about being an educator. In school, for me the most memorable experiences were with my teachers. Even when we arrived in the U.S. I attended several different schools so the great teachers I had were the most direct and impactful people I met. Those teachers not only taught me how to speak, read and write; they taught me how to think of myself and be the best version of myself. The best teachers weren’t overly sentimental but conveyed in their behavior and their dedication how much they cared and how giving they were. I admired them with my whole heart and tried to be like them as best I could.

### **Nell Noddings and Carol Gilligan**

When I came across the work of Nell Noddings, I found that it struck a chord with me. Teachers can model caring education by displaying empathy, valuing individual strengths, treating others with kindness, and caring for one's work. Caring education is the responsibility of everyone in the community. Students are expected to be caring towards each other. Caring education also breaks down the idea that only women should be nurturers. Boys and girls can have empathetic relationships, be in a non-combative environment, and care for their studies without the burden of gender roles. Caring education can also be a place where students that need extra care like immigrants, minorities, and English Language Learners (ELL).

Nel Noddings (1984) who first addressed caring education said: "As we build an ethic of caring and as we examine education under its guidance, we shall see that the greatest obligation of educators, inside and outside formal schooling, is to nurture the ethical ideals of those with whom they come in contact" (p. 49). She states that teachers can model ethical and caring behavior to their students that promote a supportive and "allowed to fail" (p.22) environment. What Noddings asserts is that caring behavior in the classroom is at the root of providing engaging and impactful education.

Carol Gilligan's *In a Different Voice* (1982) emphasizes the fact that although the primary aim [of education] is to grow a student's intellect they still have a responsibility to be caring educators. Gilligan shares an anecdote of a math teacher applying a caring model in her class. In the story the teacher gives a test to her class in which a few students fail the test. Rather than simply giving the test back and having a "better luck next time" attitude and discouraging the failing students, she decides to give a retest for those students. At first she is afraid that the retest would seem unfair to the students who did well the first time. The truth she realizes, is that she is

not taking anything away from the passing students by giving the failing students another chance. In other words, it demonstrates that value that education is not a competition and that there shouldn't have to be winners or losers. The educator has an opportunity to emphasize real student learning and a supportive environment, not to pit her students against one another.

What matters most in today's schools as a measure of how students and teachers can create a context for cultivating care. Noddings notes that the essential conversation should be one focusing on ways in which we might help students be reflective, curious, and caring in all school subjects, with all people, and with our environment. (Heid & Kelehear, 2007, p.412)

Caring education means that not only teachers are caring but the students are as well.

"Reciprocal, egalitarian, openness, honesty, fairness, and collaboration, reflection— these and other characteristics are the descriptors of Noddings' school built on care "(Heid & Kelehear, 2007, p.413). Noddings says that the classroom needs to reflect caring values. Teachers shouldn't try to motivate their students with threats or harsh punishments but focus on the student's individual strengths and needs. Noddings believes that in a perfect caring school the students and teachers would: be kept together longer (from year to year) to cultivate relationships, while not have controlling class environments, and giving one part of the day to talk about the themes of care.

Nodding's and Gilligan's concept of caring ethics and education rests on the assumption that everyone in the community contributes to a caring and supportive environment. Their vision has every person in a community being interconnected to each other and responsible for nurturing each other. "Every educational effort must be the maintenance and enhancement of caring.

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Parents, police, social workers, teachers, preachers, neighbors, coaches, older siblings, must all embrace this primary aim” (Gilligan, 1982, p. 172).

Being a caring educator is often seen as a feminine and secondary to other pursuits in society. Caring education doesn’t have to be a female approach, it can be a value taught to both genders in school.

Women in most Western nations have options outside the home and are no longer occupationally limited to the caregiving professions...but people still need care, and the care tradition is one that should not be entirely lost. Today both girls and boys should be educated for caregiving as well as breadwinning. (Noddings, 2001, p. 29)

Caring and sensitivity in the classroom needn’t be a feminine value. It is a value that can empower boys and girls. I believe the caring education classroom is more egalitarian and allows for girls to be equal players and boys to show compassion and value interpersonal relationships.

### **Feminism and How We Socialize Boys**

“Feminine values” such as being a caregiver, being sensitive to others, thinking of the group and others needs are sometimes dismissed because they are perceived as feminine. There is an idea of getting ahead and being independently successful as both a masculine and a preferred attitude in school.

How schools are researched can be effected when there isn’t caring education in place. In Gilligan’s “A Different Voice” she explains how psychological studies in schools often centered on male subjects and male gaze constructs. She found that in the conclusions being made in these studies were limited, there was “not enough material for a chapter on girls” (Gilligan, 1982, p. 35). This is important because when girls’ voices are heard less and less in the classroom the data is skewed, suggesting a hostile environment to girls. In “Making Connections: The Relational



Worlds of Adolescent Girls at Emma Willard School” Gilligan was able to conduct her own research at several schools in the Boston area (Gilligan & Goldberg, 2000, pp. 704). In this research, she found the preadolescents girl students were open and confident in responding to her questions about their own thoughts and ethics. However, once they got to eleven to sixteen years old they were much more prone to use the phrase “I don’t know.” She explains this phenomenon to be in part because once they start to become part of adult society their values, such as placing values on caring relationships, is replaced with the patriarchal values of “independences, separation, and autonomy” (Gilligan & Goldberg, 2000, pp. 704). Bringing back the caring values works to create a safer environment for girls’ voices and classroom equality.

Another example given in the Gilligan and Goldberg’s text about the patriarchal values of success is about how fathers start to prime their boys. In school and at home the boys play games that are highly regimented and based on rules of “fairness.” However, boys as young as five or six are told to repress their emotions by their fathers in order to “become men;” this what makes caring education so poignant. It is not only just women and teachers that need to embrace Caring Education as a value but everyone. Just as girls are harmed by being perceived as second class people if caught valuing relationships and empathy, boys are also harmed by losing an important part of their being. It is a choice to be a caring educator and to model that behavior, yet it is pivotal to educating the next generation of people that will function in that world.

### **Integrating Caring in the Classroom**

Caring education can have an important role in affecting how young men behave in their communities. Caring education is meant to teach students how to be contributing and active/supportive members of their community. It is more than just a “feel good” notion to be implemented in the classroom. It’s important for students to cultivate a caring attitude with their

education, other students, and their community. Caring education can target the feeling of apathy that students can get in an uncaring environment.

Negative behavior dominate most schools. Programs or strategies that enhance caring values, attitudes, and behaviors by providing students with opportunities to discuss caring, to demonstrate caring to others, and to participate thoughtfully in caring relationships with peers and adults are scarce. (Bosworth, 1995, p. 686).

Caring is about hearing individuals needs and point of view. In Bosworth's study she listens to the voices of students about how they view caring behavior. There are assumptions of many within society that adolescents are naturally egocentric and that adolescent boys may not have the tools to exhibit caring behavior. In the study she interviewed over 100 students in two middle schools in the Midwest, one urban and one suburban. She asked them what they defined as caring behavior. The students responded by saying that caring for someone was “doing something for someone” and “watching over them” and not laughing at them when they fail at something and giving them caring advice ( Bosworth, 1995, p.687). Students also felt that having a rapport, having loyalty, and sharing stories/listening to one another were part of care. The study showed that when asked, both boys and girls had similar concepts of caring and the boys did not emote less than the girls about their feelings. Knowing how students conceptualize caring is important for building a classroom environment that promotes caring. The study found that most interactions between students and teachers were neutral. The students were polite but the typical activities of lectures, workbook exercises and silent reading didn't promote interpersonal interaction. Even activities like studying the Holocaust or having a canned food drive for people in need didn't promote conversations about caring in the classroom. Students were not often given a chance to help one another in the classroom. The busy schedule of the day

did not leave a lot of time to demonstrate caring. When the students were given a chance to help each other, like when the students that did well on a test could help the other students study for the retest, it tended to favor the academically strong. This can emphasize the importance of certain students over others. If a student in school isn't academically strong they can feel apathetic because they never get to have positive interactions in the classroom. It can make it seem like they don't matter as much.

As a teacher, there are a few overarching factors that help the students perceive them as caring. Helping with schoolwork/answering questions was an important factor. Also, valuing the individual was important. The caring teachers would recognize that some students learn differently, would notice changes in behavior, and would ask about their overall school experience. Treating the students with respect is also important. When a student made a mistake or acted out the teacher would not lose her cool or humiliate them in front of the class. Tolerance was also mentioned as giving students a chance to make up work and improve class behavior. Explaining work was important because students weren't left adrift on a homework assignment. The teacher would take the time to walk the students through an assignment to give them the framework to succeed. The teacher would also check for student understanding. The teacher would walk around and make sure people weren't "lost" in the lesson. Encouragement (one of my personal favorites) made the students feel that the teacher was paying attention to their advances, and if the student fails they gently point out that they can do better. Finally, students saw planning "fun activities" for the students a sign that they care.

Outside of the classroom, teachers modeled caring behavior when they would listen to the students' personal problems. This concept goes back to the idea of being a good listener and spending time with the student. It rolls into the next quality of giving good advice. Being a

mentor and giving the students feedback on their goals and aspirations is important. It shows that the teacher was personally invested in their future. Being there off hours was also important. I know that when I observed at a high school in Buckhead I noticed that students that had fallen behind or had a hard time focusing in the classroom would come in after school to do their work. There was a feeling of warmth and an open door policy to get help and individual attention even outside the classroom. Students saw kindness/politeness, a joy in helping others, and an attitude that each student can and will succeed. The students can learn to have these caring attitudes with each other and the larger community. Modeling caring behavior makes for more caring students overall.

In White's 2003 article he discusses the opportunity that English teachers have to promote caring in the classroom and create caring individuals. Langer (2000) cites a classroom example where students can read literature about the American Vietnam War and the USSR's attempt to conquer Afghanistan. It opens the students' cultural perspective and promotes a "curriculum of caring." Langer (2000) writes:

Increasingly, we are learning how not to care for any but those close to us, and these circles of care grow smaller with each random act of violence, each perceived threat to our own economic security, and each political diatribe that separates the needs of the young from the old, white from black, women from men. We are teaching our children and young adults not to care through our acts of commission and omission. (p.6)

Students are not taught to be caring people but to be academically adequate (Noddings, 1995). Literature teachers can show students stories that give another point of view and work against bigotry, hatred, and violence (Langer, 2000, p. 297).

### **Engrossment & Inclusion**

Empathy is a big part of caring education but so is engrossment. Engrossment, in the context of caring education, means “intense interest, even absorption in the life, the thoughts, and the experiences of the cared-for. It is “an open, nonselective receptivity to the cared-for. This intense absorption is not romantic and it transcends empathy” (Langer, 2000, p. 304-305). This concept leads into another important concept of caring education: Inclusion. Inclusion means that the teacher sees the world through the student's eyes and their own simultaneously. This approach keeps the teacher from separating herself from the student. The inclusive teacher “rejects the notion of life as a contest” (Langer, 2000). Finally, caring education dictates that the student reciprocates the caring behavior. This reciprocity can get tricky because students may not want or be able to show outward signals of emotion or response. In the example given by Langer she has a student that refuses to do his English course work. The first day of class he said he would not do a lick of work and that it wasn't personal but there was nothing to change his mind. This student profoundly didn't care about his education and yet he seemed like a prime candidate for caring education. Noddings puts an emphasis on observable reciprocity but I believe that it is more complex than that. As mentioned previously, female students may not reciprocate openly in class for fear of appearing too assertive or of feeling their contributions don't matter.

The concept of faith put forth by Freire (1985) is an interesting variation on Noddings ideas. He says that the oppressed, in particular, have a culture of silence. There is a sense that the teacher has to see the potential that the student has before they do. “He believes in their voices before they believe they can speak; he believes in their freedom before they even recognize their subjugation” (Langer, 2000, p. 311). I think this is a better approach than Nodding's notion that students who don't reciprocate don't continue to receive caring education.” In the example that

Langer talks about in her English class I think I would personally take the Freire's faith approach. If a student was overwhelmed, disenchanted or any otherwise negative about learning, it would be my duty to facilitate at least a positive and supportive environment.

The classroom is a place where students can be part of a larger community. In school they can learn to empathize with others, gain confidence in their own voices, and be valuable parts of their community. Although caring education is not widespread as an ideal in the classroom, the sentiment to build relationships and shows emotionally positive relationships is a feeling that most teachers share. I think school can also broaden your outlook on the world and widen the circle of people and things that you care about. I want my teaching to be centered around context and their voice. I want my students to have choices and opportunities for independent work and team participation. I want my students to learn empathy and learn from the diversity of their community.

In this thesis I hope to create work that celebrates both my Latina and American culture. In making work that shows others my background and context I hope to teach my students how to embrace and share their own rich cultural backgrounds with their peers through their artwork. IN this way, I hope to foster an ethic of care in my teaching. In the next section, I want to introduce the reader to the specific Chilean artistry I will be pulling from for my own studio work.

### 3 ART BASED RESEARCH

In the paragraphs below, I introduce the different works I used as inspiration for my studio work. I combined these Chilean craft styles with the styles and imagery I have gathered from my life here in the U.S.

#### Arts of Chile

When I was young I would go to a place called “Plaza de Los Dominicos” after we would get out of mass. Although it has changed somewhat since then, it still contains an open market with stalls that sell indigenous art of Chile and South America. Local artists who were not trained in European tradition could sell their wares there. There were a few that stood out to me and still resonate with me today.

Arpilleras (or Hessian, which is Spanish for burlap or sackcloth) are three-dimensional appliqué textiles that display scenes of life in Chile. Arpilleras were used by folk artists like Violeta Parra, an artist, poet and musician who revived the traditional musical sounds of Chile. She was inspired by the early Arpilleras of Isla Negra, but those only included embroidery and not applique. In 1958, Parra was laid confined to her bed with hepatitis and took a piece of wool and other scraps of cloth to sew together scenes. She used her work to depict surrealist scenes of figures from the past juxtaposed with themes of the present.

On September 11, 1973 “El Golpe” occurred, a military coup that put Pinochet in power in Chile. Martial law was declared and political dissenters (mostly men) were arrested, imprisoned, tortured; some were exiled and some “disappeared” leaving their families indigent. The women left behind found in Arpilleras a medium for political critique. An organization called Vicaria de la Solidaridad, a Catholic group, sponsored workshops to create panels documenting these times (Morales, cir. 1984). Figure 3.1, by Violeta Morales, depicts the families of the detained and

disappeared protesting in front of the Supreme Court (Margaret, 2010). Figure 3.2, also by Morales, depicts bodies that began turning up in the mountains of people that had disappeared during the revolution (Margaret, 2010).



Figure 3.1 'Untitled' by Violeta Morales

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Figure 3.2 'Untitled'  
by Violeta Morales



Figure 3.3 'Untitled' by Rita Serapion

Today arpilleras are made primarily by the poor women living in pueblos where sources of income are few. They typically depict colorful and peaceful scenes of country life. They are also being made in Peru and are popular for children's room decoration. When I was a child, the bright colors, interesting imagery, and raised figures captured my imagination. I used the arpillera tradition to create my own piece which reflects my life and propriospect.

Another form of folk art that made an impression on me was the various folkloric ceramic work. The first were these charming little façades of the front of little homes (see figure 3.4).

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Figure 3.4 'Untitled' by unknown

These façades would depict old and rustic architecture from 1700's and 1800's. They are a little bit kitsch but represent a simpler, less modern time in Chile; so unlike the crowded metropolis that Santiago is today (Untitled, circa 1990).

Another well-known Chilean craft are the "Chanchitos de la Suerte" ("little good-luck pigs") which originate from Pomaire, a town west of the capital, Santiago. Although the origin is not clear the fact that the pig stands on three legs and does not fall makes him a symbol of good luck. The pigs are made from the characteristic terra-cotta of the Pomaire area and are typically the color of the bare clay (Untitled, circa 1990).



Figure 3.5 'Untitled' by unknown artisan of Pomaire, Chile.

Another piece which is not referenced online in the exact form I witnessed growing up are the round, sometimes apple or fruit shaped villages similar to figure 6.



*Figure 3.6 'Untitled' by unknown artisan of Chile.*

Unlike the one pictured above, the ones I saw were larger and depicted the sky and mountains above the village streets, carved in the round on the form. Typically, the village portion would be left matte while the night sky would be beautifully glazed in a high gloss. They are a craft that idealizes rural landscapes in Chile and their globe-like shape makes it seem like the village depicted really is the whole world.

The last Chilean craft I will reference is probably the best-known, Pablo Zabal's blue ceramic zoomorphic figures.

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*Figure 3.7 'Rooster' by Pablo Zabal.*

He is a Chilean native that had a Chilean father and Italian mother. His work was popularized in the 70's but uses the classic technique of Sgraffito. Unlike other Chilean clay works, his pieces are first made in clay but then cast in plaster in order to be recreated over and over. The pieces are then dipped in cobalt and the negative space is scraped away by hand, leaving the cobalt and white designs behind.

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#### 4 CHAPTER IV DOCUMENTATION OF PROCESS & REFLECTIONS

The study of the art I made using my propriospect took place from June 2016 to March 2017, and I finalized my thesis at the end of March 2017. I submitted my plans for my five works to my professors November 2016. Drawing upon the Chilean art forms described above, I created a series of works expressive of both my heritage and my current propriospect. Below, I will walk through each part of the project, explaining the traditional process as well as how I planned to change it to combine with my American sensibilities in art.

The first work I made was the ceramic façades of residential front doors. The difference is I will be depicting a residence either in Midtown, Atlanta (where I live) or in Conyers, GA (where my parents live). The piece starts off as a 3/4 inch slab of white clay and I waited until its leather hard to cut into it with a pin tool. To give a textured effect I layered clay on top of the slab when depicting details like the railing in the foreground.

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Figure 4.1+ 'La-Hacienda Facade' sketch by Maria Garcia.

This piece is directly inspired by the facades made in Chile. Just like those facades, this piece is a of more idyllic Georgia. I lived in a rundown apartment building in Midtown Atlanta but

decided against using it in favor of my parents country style home in Conyers, Georgia. A possible extension of this project could be that the students could make less idyllic facades of what their homes really look like, rather than what is picturesque.

Using the “Chanchito de la Suerte” I took the images of popular creatures used by artists in toys like “Kid Robot” and Cartoon Network’s animation “Adventure Time.” The figures will have three legs and will be built with red clay, native to Georgia. The original chanchitos have three legs because it’s supposed to symbolize their ability to be stable with so little. The original figures also use light and dark clays because chanchitos are usually displayed with at least two or three. The figures I made are cute and child-like, like the originals but the style is entirely drawn from American popular illustration culture.



Figure 4.2 ‘Good Luck Monsters,’ *Sketch* by Maria Garcia.

I turned the globe-like pueblo piece to do a self-portrait in a realistic style (not a simplified style) but applying the same carving and glazing techniques. The original piece left the pueblo and mountains in a matte glaze and the sky in high gloss. The piece is made of clay just like the original globe pueblos but combined with classical representational techniques learned in

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college. This piece combines two concepts of "home" for me, by using the art form from Chile to show my American home.



Figure 4.3 'Pueblo Self-Portrait' Sketch by Maria Teresa Garcia.

My final combination piece was based on Pablo Zabal's blue ceramic figures. The original figures use a blue glaze and the clay body is white. I am using the same sgraffito technique and blue color to create a metaphoric scene of my migration from Chile to Florida. The composition is broken into two parts with the Andes in the background and a beach in the foreground. I also added Zabal-like flourishes throughout the composition to give it the visual density of Zabal's figures.

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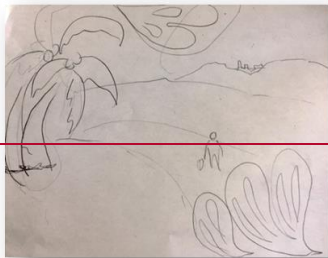
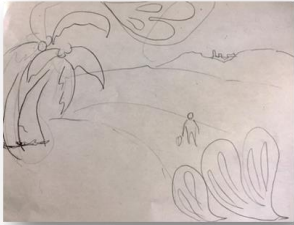


Figure 4.4 'Arrival' Sketch by Maria Teresa Garcia.

To emphasize the connection between the inspiration and the work I am making my own quilt/arpillera. The arpilleras were traditionally used to tell a story, usually with political commentary. I made mine to draw a connection between the Chilean pieces that inspired me and the resulting work I made. In the making of my arpillera I used both cotton and felt as a materials and depicted the Chilean sculpture that inspired me on one side of the arpillera and the pieces I made on the other. The images are simple silhouette within a square of fabric; similar to American quilts. The squares will make up the quilt and be approximately 18"x36".

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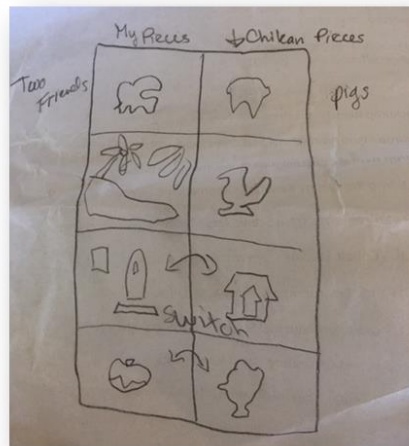


Figure 4.5 'Synthesis' by Maria Garcia.

In total I created 5 works, (one cloth, the rest in clay) November 2016 through February of 2017, leaving time to complete my written thesis in time to graduate in May, 2017. Throughout this process I reflected upon and document my artmaking, and continue researching these visual traditions and other artists who have been inspired by them. In addition, I considered implications for my teaching. Through this studio-based thesis project, I hope to gain insights into how an artist can draw upon cultural traditions to express a hybridized identity, and I hope to feel more confident in developing opportunities for my students to explore similar themes.

#### **“Pueblo Self Portrait”**

The first piece was created in my ceramics class at GSU under the guidance of Christina West. I used the pueblo ceramic round piece as my inspiration and combined it with my own face as a self-portrait. I combined the light relief style of the pueblos on the bottom part of the piece (near my chin) and glazed the sky to be a deep, shiny night sky on the middle portion. For the top portion I formed mountains in a matte finish.

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I started the bust self-portrait by flattening a quarter inch of red Georgia clay and cutting it into 3"-6" wide strips. For the neck I cut a 3"x8" rectangular strip and slip and scored it to form a cylinder. I formed with my fingers dips and grooves in the neck cylinder to make it consistent with my form. I then cut another rectangular slab for the chin and the base of the head. However, this time I cut the bottom of the slab at angle so that the slab could bloom out like the mouth of a vase. After evening out that layer as well as I could and letting it get a little dry (so it could support weight) I added another rectangular slab to create the forehead and the back of the head. For the top portion I made a shallow bowl with a pinch pot technique. Once it was leather hard I flipped it over and scored and slipped it to attach it to the top of the head. At this point I had two oval like vessels stacked on top of each other as the base for my bust. I had a neck, chin, forehead and the round top but nothing more. At this point I let the clay dry out a day semi covered so that it could withstand the weight of the clay I was going to add for the features.

The next time I came in I brought two photographs of my head from the side and from the front. I started to create a faithful profile according to the photographs I brought. I started by adding a halved ball of clay and scoring and slipping to attach it. This portion was to give me a chin. However, I realized that just under my chin and I had skin that did not go dip and attach to my neck at a right angle. I had a more gradual slope from the edge of my chin to the top of my adams apple. I flattened and cut out a diamond shape slab of clay and attached it under the chin to give a more natural curve. Once I added addition details of dips and symmetry of my chin by referencing the photos I moved on the mouth. The mouth was one of the more challenging portions of my face. I (like most people) had a more full lip on the bottom. I created this bottom lip by creating a coil of clay that tapered on the right and left and attached it half an inch from the top of the chin. I pushed the center of the coil (once attached) created a little buttress to

support the lip. I wanted the bust to have a closed mouth so I added another tapered coil with a very small gap above the bottom lip. I did not add grooves or details at this point because I realized that when I attached the basic shapes onto the bust I inadvertently would misshape whatever was already on the face. I proceeded to a pyramid like piece of clay for the nose by slipping and scoring both surfaces. At this point I realized that although my cheek bones are not prominent on my face I still lacked flesh to match my appearance. I then added additional handmade slabs of clay to lower cheeks on both sides as well. I also realized I had very pronounced hollows under my eyes that gave my face depth. I had the cheeks to create that depth under the eye socket but needed it above. I added a rectangular handmade slab of clay just above where my eyes would be and added a little triangle of clay to connect it to the bridge of my nose. At this point I paused adding pieces of clay and to a metal rib tool to smooth and contour the whole bust. I removed some volume from the back of the head and evened out the cheeks and forehead on either side of the bust. Since the clay was getting leather hard it was easy to both smooth what I had as well as remove portions that I didn't need. At this point I had the general mass needed to finish my bust so I started to add the little details. I added fine lines and a deep but smooth partition between the two lips. I didn't want to have an open mouth but I wanted to look like the best could open their mouth and speak at any time. I pronounced the dips above and below the lips and moved on to the nose. The nose was probably the most difficult because I wanted it to be true to life (not overly flattering) but work well with the rest of the face. I added to balls of clay for the nostrils and carved into it holes. I then carefully carved the two depressions right above my nostrils at the end of my nose. I then added a pronounced thinning at the bridge of the nose with the sudden widening at the top. My nose is a good combination of my mother and father's nose and I could see pronounced similarities from both. I then moved onto

the eyes which required two balls of clay; one for each eye socket. I then smoothed and tapered the eyes on both sides. I wanted the eyes to be open and gazing ahead but realized, after I achieved the basic shape, that I preferred to have the eyes closed. Having the eyes closed made the piece look more pensive and worked well later on when I glazed the sky color over them. I continued to add details by carving the hairs of my eye brows and eyelashes. I went over it again to smooth over and even out the sculpture on either side before I added the last additional pieces of clay to the top of head to form the mountains. I hand formed about four peaks and scored and slipped them to the top. To avoid air traps I punctured several holes that went through the mountains into the inside of the head. I smoothed them and added little creases to create little mountain streams and crevices. Before I could carve the pueblo houses on the bottom third of my piece I needed to paint that portion white. The only way I could add color and still have the clay be wet enough to carve into was if I used underglaze. I covered the bottom third with white underglaze, which can be applied to clay without a first firing, and carved the walls, doors and roofs unto the red clay. The color of clay and the white glaze were perfect to create immediate contrast without adding more colors. The middle third of the piece was glazed with glossy, deep blue underglaze for the sky and I added small white dots to create the stars. I also added portions of red in the sky to create variations in color and depth. On the top third, at the top of the forehead, I sponged a combination of blue, green and yellow in matte underglaze on the mountains. Even though the mountains (on top of sculpture) are technically above the sky I believe it still reads well and gives it a surreal quality.

After I glazed it and let it get bone dry I fired it in the kiln and it came out beautifully. The piece stands well and works has visual interest with the combination of the texture of the puebls, and the matte and gloss glaze.



Figure 4.6 'Pueblo Self Portrait' by Maria Teresa Garcia

Before I made the piece I knew I wanted to use something that was personal and unique to influence to my peers. I had a piece in the shape of an apple with a pueblo, mountains and night sky in my home in Chile. I was always fascinated by its delicacy and detail. It was something I had always wished to try and it is what turned out to be the beginning of a body of work for my thesis. Originally I only wanted to make the piece as an example of making art in the multicultural classroom. However, when I was contemplating what type of work I wanted to make for my thesis I knew that I wanted to create work that would speak to my point of view and culture. I wanted a chance to showcase some of influences I brought with me from Chile as well as what I liked in the U.S. visual media.

A lot of Chilean craft art is made so that anyone can buy it and it can be created by various artisans again and again. Thus, Chilean craft art never incorporates the likeness of a particular artist or a particular place (unless it is a public and touristic place). Bringing my likeness to the design changes its function fundamentally. Even though my pueblo portrait mirrors the original closely in design it is fundamentally changed by my personalization. Because the artist's

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decorative was short-lived and obscure it is that much more specific to my time and experience in Chile.

### “Good Luck Monsters”

I made the “Good Luck Monsters” in the same ceramics class as my “Pueblo Self Portrait” and again this was before I officially began my thesis body of work. However, I once again used Chilean craft art as a reference. In the original assignment I was to take some items of my own that I liked or had personal significance. I searched my house and found a couple of items I thought would work well together: the chanchito de la suerte and a plastic toy sculpture called “Totem Doppleganger” by Anton Ginzburg (in figure 4.2+7). I also incorporated elements of my own by adding a mouth, face and interlacing arms.



Figure 4.7 ‘Totem Doppleganger’ by Anton Ginzburg

After I sketched out the rounded heads and made sure they had the three legs and a little coil of clay to use as arms (rather than a tail) just like the chanchitos I knew that often time people would buy a few chanchitos at a time of different sizes and clay color. I also know that the little tails could serve sometimes as a loop to put a rope or thread through to hang them. Having at least two figures with three legs and looped appendages seemed like good attributes to borrow. I

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liked the idea of having a dark and a light figure and I wanted to make them simple in design like both the chanchitos and the "Totem Doppelgangers".

The "Totem Doppelgangers" come from a culture of American and European love of collectible toys. Kidrobot, Rotofungi and other retailers make high quality, artist designed vinyl and plastic toys for adults. Most of the contributing designers are graphic designers, illustrators, animators and fine artists. It's a culture I became aware of in college as most of peers collected and dreamed of creating their own collectible toys. Amateurs could even buy popular toys in white vinyl and custom paint them to sell or enter into competitions. It was an easy way to collect work from contemporary artists and to borrow from the kawaii culture.

Kawaii is the Japanese term for "cute" but the concept goes much further. It encapsulates the adorable qualities that character "Hello Kitty" has to the characters in Manga (serial comics) and Anime (Japanese Animation) series and films. It is a look that has permeated American animation culture and pop culture in general. Large heads, small bodies and simple features are characteristic in both American and Japanese illustration. Thus, the "Totem Doppelgangers" have that rich background to their aesthetic.

Once I had come up with the basic design of the body, face and colors I started the construction. I took white low-fire clay and created a large pinch pot about 4"-5" tall and 6"-7" in diameter. I would periodically roll the bowl on its side in order to even out the walls of the bowl. Once I had a good shape I would turn the bowl upside down and gently tap it on the table to create an even and flat lip. I put that bowl aside to dry while I create another bowl identical to the first. When the two were finished I scored and slipped the lip of both bowls and pieced them together. Invariably, the lips would not match up completely so I filled it with small rolls of clay. After they were initially attached I had a mellow sized ball that was bulging around its center. I

first took my metal rib tool and firmly shaved off any excess bulges or bumps, especially where the two halves met. Once smoothed I rolled the sphere along the seam until it was almost impossible to tell where the two pieces were joined. I put the sphere aside and rolled out a large slab to construct the legs. I knew I wanted the legs to be dainty but I also knew they would have to be substantial in order to support the weight of the massive head. I noticed that the chanchitos had cone like legs that tapered off as they got closer to the floor. For the first leg I cut a rainbow shaped piece of slab. I found however that the bottom portion had too much clay and had to be trimmed extensively in order to create the tapered point I desired. For the next leg I cut an open fan shape and it made a better cone. However, I found that in order to support the body the larger end of the cone had to be cut at a slant in order to act as a buttress to the head. I turned the head upside down and started attaching the legs. Every so often I would turn it over and gently place it on the table right side up to see if its feet would touch the ground and truly support the vessel. It was difficult to balance the piece and to avoid giving the head a flat spot when placed upside down. Once the legs were attached I poked holes with my pin tool in the center, between its legs and the end of each leg to avoid air getting trapped. I dried him out for a time on his head and at the next session of work I turned him over and made a coil to create his appendage. It wasn't difficult to make or attach but I just had to make sure it was low enough and at a good angle to accommodate the other figures appendage. I next cut a large hole on the opposite side of his appendage for a mouth. I then made a bowl to serve as the inside of the mouth. I used a coil to gingerly attach the bowl into the head of the piece. It almost fell down into the head a few times and it was really frustrating to slip and score.

I spent a lot of time smoothing the edges and shaping the opening in order to give the mouth the expression I had planned in my sketch. I wanted it to look not like he was screaming or mad.



I wanted him to look like he was kind of gawking or opening up for the dentist. I wanted both the figures to fun-loving but appealing to the adult eye. I added the teeth by creating tapered coils and scoring the bottom of them and the inside of the mouth. I attached them with relative ease and just had to be careful I didn't push the other teeth aside when attaching the last few. I carved out the two eyes on either side of the mouth in concentric circles with a bottom of a fine tip permanent marker. I put the large figure aside and used the same process to create the smaller figure. The difference was the creation of the appendage and the addition of the face. I constructed the legs in the same fashion as the large figure but this time I contoured the head to flow better with the legs. The smaller figure needed a higher and much larger (proportional to the body) appendage. I rolled out a thick coil and looped it through the hole of the larger figures appendage. I then attached it to the smaller figure by scoring and slipping both surfaces of the coil and the head. I then made a 1/4" thick circle of clay and scored and slipped it to the head of the figure. I let it dry a little to get leather hard and carved a simple child's face on it.

I allowed both figures to get bone dry, used underglaze to glaze them (one white, one black) and very carefully placed them in the kiln. After the first firing I had some serious setbacks. Two of the legs of the large figure popped off (because of lack of hair ventilation is my guess) which caused it to tip over and yank off the appendage of the smaller figure. I was crushed but my professor Ms. West said I could put a gloss glaze on both and the places where the pieces broke or detached. In the kiln the gloss glaze would act as a binding adhesive. I glazed the teeth of the large figure's mouth with a green glaze that gives it a green tint and applied the gloss glaze on the broken joints and all over the piece. I carefully used the broken leg as a stilt and made sure that the appendage of the small figure wasn't in contact at all with the large (the glaze would bind them). I carefully placed them back in the kiln and fired them again. The gloss glaze did

manage to attach the appendage on the small figure (but not perfectly, it shifted in the kiln) and for some reason one of the legs of the large figure attached and the other didn't. I glued the detached large leg with an epoxy and used black and white paint to touch up the joints of the reattached appendages.



Figure 4.8 “Good luck Monsters” by Maria Teresa Garcia

The “Good Luck Monsters” were the most troublesome pieces. Although having three legs is considered lucky it is a logistical nightmare when made on a large scale. When the real chanchitos are made they are light enough and their legs are stout enough that they can support their own weight even when the clay is wet. I also feel the features of the figures could have been simplified to reflect the styles of both the chanchitos and vinyl toys. I also would have been interested to leave the clay bare and simply use two different types of clay to give them color variation. I also feel they don't work as well as the other pieces in the series because the style is and color scheme is somewhat different.

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### “Hacienda Façade”

The “Hacienda Façade” was a piece I made with a full intention of creating a body of work using the influences of Chilean craft art and depiction of my parents Conyers, GA home. The facades I saw in Chile were common and were meant to idealize white washed village homes with wooden doors and rustic bricks. The home that my parents have in Conyers (which I ultimately chose over my apartment building) is in a drastically different style. It impeccably painted has a new and decidedly Southern American country style. Every window is double paned, with a screen and faux brass latch. There is a wrap-around porch on the first floor (perfect for rocking chairs) and a small porch with a large decorative octagonal window on the second floor porch (see figure 4.4.1). The porch fence is made up of geometrically carved rails, white wainscoting on every window, door and wall. There is even a decorative weather vane at the top of the second floor which is not unlike one’s found on a farm house or barn in the American countryside.



Figure 4.9 Reference Picture for “Hacienda Façade” by Maria Teresa Garcia

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I started this piece with a simple drawing (see figure 4.4.2) of the front of my parents' home. I only included a small fraction but one that would be representative of the style but still visually interesting. I then decided to move on to the production phase.



Figure 4.10 “Hacienda Facade” Sketch by Maria Teresa Garcia

I rolled out a large  $\frac{3}{4}$ ” slab of white clay and let it get leather hard. After I cut down a rectangle of approximately 8”x12” I cut down little strips to make up the areas in highest relief in the picture plane. The pieces that stuck out highest was the roof on top and to the porch, the front steps/railing and the front porch railing. After I had scored and slipped those pieces on I started to use a clay tool to carve out the horizontally paneled interior of the porches. Carving them out was challenging because there was constant interruptions in the wall panel by the door, windows and railings. After carving for a while I drove everyone crazy at the ceramics studio with my constant blowing of the clay bits off the piece. I ended up having to use a large soft brush just to get rid of the shavings in the little crevices of the piece. The next step involved cutting out and applying the windows, doors and texture. I simplified the design of windows because of the scale of the model and unified the textures. I carved the textures mainly on the brick wall supporting the first floor and the tar shingle roofing. I also added brick patterns on the steps and blades of

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grass beside the steps and railing. The last clay I cut was  $\frac{3}{4}$ " tall border of a thin rectangular piece wrapping around the edge of the façade. I was advised to add these pieces by my husband (who is a ceramicist) around the edges in order to prevent it from drying unevenly and curling up around the edges.

In order to avoid doing two firings I used underglazes I had and ones I borrowed from my husband's studio (see figure 4.4.3). White wasn't needed since the clay itself fires white. As shown in the picture, the colors appear to be both matte and very light.



*Figure 4.11++ "Hacienda Facade" Prefire by Maria Teresa Garcia*

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Once it completely dried I fired it in the kiln at 06 over 17 hours. Luckily since the construction of the piece was simpler it only had a minor mishap on one of the border slivers of clay. The colors fired very well and became much deeper and had a satin finish.



Figure 4.12 “Hacienda Facade” Sketch by Maria Teresa Garcia

I realized after the firing that the horizontal wall panel pattern was not carved behind the first floor railings and the color of the walls was not quite the right shade. Overall it worked out well and did remind me of the Chilean façades I was accustomed to.

The reason I called it a “hacienda” was because when we moved to the States we would watch the Spanish language channel “Univision.” They would always play hilarious Mexican soap operas, many of which were set in palatial homes in the countryside. That memory as well as a Venezuelan couple we met in the U.S. calling our home a hacienda solidified it in our family vocabulary. My parents have had this home in Conyers for a long time although they don’t live there (they live in Florida). Over the years it has become a place for me and my three siblings and extended family to gather on holidays and visits. My parents are always improving on it by repairing plumbing to turning our garage into a guest house (known as “la casita”).

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I believe the original facades sold in Chile were meant to be nostalgic for a less cosmopolitan, but more rustic and agrarian Chile. The farm-like house in Conyers, although in a drastically different style, is trying to capture the same thing.

### **“Arrival”**

To make my “Arrival” piece I once again went to my husbands’ studio and rolled out a medium size slab of clay and cut out a piece (5”x9”) with a hand blade. This time I made my slab a little thicker and the composition a little more compact. In order to achieve the white and blue effect I had to use white clay and cover it in blue glaze to get it prepared to get the sgraffito effect. It took three to four layers of glaze just make the blue nontransparent. After I allowed the piece to get leather hard I began to carve out the left portion which contained the beach/U.S. portion of the composition.



Figure 4.13 “Arrival” by Maria Teresa Garcia

I used wire end modeling tools of various sizes to create a simple carving depiction of a shore, palm trees and underbrush. I next went to the right side of the composition in order to carve out the horizon above the mountain ranges that surround Santiago, the city where I lived. I

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also added among the mountains a small skyline to include the busy metropolis as part of my memory of home. To connect the two disparate images I added the figure with their back to the mountains facing the beach right in the middle. To recall the Zabal ceramic style more closely and integrate the two images more smoothly I added the tear drop shaped flourishes I had sketched earlier. After carving out the drawing I made I let the piece get bone dry and fired it at cone 06 (low firing). After I got it out of the kiln I was somewhat disappointed in the intensity of the blue color but overall I was pleased with its graphic simplicity. The white clay showed well through the carved portion. The sheen was also consistent with Zabal's work although I didn't use the special, high temperature glass glazes he uses.

I originally wanted to make a piece in the style of Pablo Zabal's blue scraffito sculptures to emulate a "Pray for Atlanta" sign popularized by R. Land (figure 4.7.1). However, I nixed the idea in favor of something that kept closer to the theme of immigration, my point of view and the rest of the work.



Figure 4.14 "Pray for Atlanta" by R. Land

Looking at the work I had completed I wanted something that was closer to the theme of my connection to the U.S. and Chile. The idea I had of depicting my move from Chile to the U.S. for my arpillera was complex so I decided to use the Zabal style to make that piece. Once I made the

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sketch I realized I could use the flourishes popular in Zabal's work to combine imagery of Chile and Florida in a cohesive design.

### **"Synthesis"**

To construct my own arpillera I had to first select my materials. I had white felt which I thought would work well since all of my ceramic pieces had white in them. I considered using blue (like Zabal's pottery) or a wide variety of color based on which piece I was representing. However, it was my last piece I the variety of patterned fabric was limited and my I didn't like the colors the felt came in. I decided on felt because based on past experience I knew it was less likely to shift when I sewed and drew on it. The most neutral color of felt that I could get was a soft green which at least did not clash with the color palettes (and matched the façade piece) of the ceramic pieces.

Fabric selected, I then sketched out the design and decided each piece would have its own square about the width of a regular letter stock sheet of paper. It seemed large enough to be seen and include a border as well as an image. I laid out the white felt first because after one try I realized it was stiffer than the green felt and didn't move as much. I took a measuring tape and a sharpie and marked out eight squares, 9" wide by 9" tall side by side in a row. I then drew the vertical line to split it into two columns and drew three horizontal lines to make up the squares. I then drew a half inch border around each square. I then drew the simple silhouettes in sharpie in the center of each square. I picked up the white felt and placed the green felt under it. I flattened it out the best I could and lay the white felt (drawing side up) on the green felt. I then used sewing pins to hold the two pieces together on various places to avoid shifting during sewing.

I went over to my sewing machine and used the drawn guidelines along the perimeter of the squares and then down the center. I then went along the inner edge of each square and sewed

along it to create the border. I did this to each of the eight of the squares to keep each square from moving too much when I sewed in the images in the center of the square. I went one by one on each square and traced the drawing I made. Each time I finished on one I would stop and carefully cut along the sewn edge so that the image and the boarder was in green and the negative space was in white. After I sewed and cut out all eight I took a long (20"x38") rectangle of white felt for the back side of my arpillera. I layed the sewn felt face side up with the white felt on top and sewed them together with a half inch boarder outside the squares all along the perimeter. I left about 4" open so that I could turn it inside out and stuff it with poly-fill. I sewed it again along the center vertical line to flatten it out and hand sewed the gap on the top shut. The green felt was problematic and tended to stretch and create folds along the edge. Over all the process was successful and only needs pins to be displayed on a wall.

There was a great deal of turmoil on the concept of my arpillera. I wanted to have piece that linked the themes of the other works like immigration, personal ephemera, Chilean craft and American popular media. Once I decided to make the "Arrival" piece be closer to a statement making piece of immigration I still felt that the pieces needed another way to be tied together. Arpilleras are nothing more than quilts that were used to comment on the current political climate and later to depict idyllic agrarian life. I wanted to use my quilt not to tell a literal story or to romanticize the countryside. I wanted to use it as a backdrop and support to all four of my sculptures.



Figure 4.15 “Synthesis” by Maria Teresa Garcia

The felt medium was completely different from the others. I felt that it was the only way I could link them to the pieces that inspired the work without having the viewer read my thesis. If I was to display these in a gallery I would at the very least have images if not real copies of each different craft for the viewer to compare the two styles. I would set the ceramic pieces on rectangular pedestals (even the façade piece on an a-frame) with the arpillera hung on the wall behind them.

When making the composition of the arpillera I abandoned the use of unusual shapes and patterned fabric and stuck to a more Quaker-like and simplified style (see figure 4.9.2).

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*Figure 4.16 Square in square quilt from Philadelphia, circa 1835*

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I only wanted to reference specifically each piece I created and its inspirational piece into two separate columns. On the one side I made simple silhouettes the chanchito de la suerte, the globe with the village on it, the pueblo façade, and the Zabal ceramic animal figure. On the other side I made simple representation of my iteration of each piece with the “Pueblo Self-Portrait,” the “Good Luck Monsters,” “Hacienda Façade,” and “Arrival.”

## 5 CHAPTER V CONCLUSION & IMPLICATIONS

The two questions I originally posed for this study was: 1) What can I learn by creating, reflecting and analyzing my process of making personally specific artwork that reflects my personal propriospect? I also asked 2) What can I glean that would be helpful to guide my students in creating their own body of work?

### *What I Learned in the Production Process*

Apart from the hurdles of the art making process discussed in the previous chapter, I realized that the work I was making went beyond culture. I realized that if another person in my same situation were to make a body of work based on the same experiences he or she would have an entirely different body of work. If my sister made work on her immigration experience and visual influences, they would be unique to her. I thought this work could be a way for me and my future students to gain a more genuine understanding of visual cultures of other people. In reality the work is a lot more revelatory of the visual culture I personally enjoy and find memorable. In other words, it specific to me and is not a generalization of Chilean immigrant women in general.

In my work I learned how I might go beyond the multicultural art classroom and use the propriospect of the students to inform their work and projects. Rather than just learn about African American artists during Black History month, I could use the specific visual culture of my African American students to speak to the classroom. Through open dialogues with the students, I can encourage them to set the boundaries of what they would like to share and hopefully be encouraged by what others are willing to share. I find that when people are given a chance to speak about themselves and their community it fosters a sense of camaraderie. Even students that feel that their culture is not unique enough will find that if they do a little digging they have a great deal to offer. When I was doing a quilt project recently with my first graders

they told me about all the different types of quilts their family members had made from different ethnicities and backgrounds. Some students had family from the north with Amish roots while others had family members from the south that had quilting groups. Giving them a small platform to look at how this art process spoke to them specifically made it more impactful as a lesson.

Every student has a different propriospect, even if they belong to the same culture. Culture is can be dictated by where they were born or their ethnicity but it each person is different. Culture informs a person's identity but it does not define it. In my classroom I hope to help my students create work that is specific to them and deeply personal.

For example, if I have a student that says that they are white and have little cultural identity I can challenge the notion by pointing out what defines them from a person from another place. They can start there as a point of reference and then dig further and try to find what visual culture they are surrounded with and what personal convictions and beliefs make up who they are.

Propriospect hinges on the idea of each person's journey and point of view. I wouldn't, for example, ask my students to make an arpillera because of its impact in my world view. Propriospect is made up of all our experiences, influences, judgments and beliefs. It's something than can change and grow as the person gains new experiences and new perspectives. In fact, my hope to allow the students to reveal their propriospect through their work and interaction in their classroom and ultimately change and influence the propriospect of others. I feel that multicultural art education is too general in its approach. At my school I have a lot of Hispanic students and when we're doing a project on Dia De Los Muertos during Hispanic heritage month I know there are stories and experiences that they could share with the class. Those shared

experiences and stories would be far more memorable for the other students and possibly a point of pride for the student sharing something about themselves. When I was growing up I remember we were studying about Nice, France and we had a student with a parent from there. He came in and he spoke to us and shared his love for cooking and raising his daughter in both places. The student also shared how the move to the states and the participation in the two cultures changed her feeling of home, family and place in world.

### **Implications**

Each of the pieces I made in this body of work can be translated into the classroom. Starting with the “Luck Monsters” I have a project that each student could adapt to their own propriospect. When I approached that project I chose one object that was ubiquitous to the Chilean home mantle. Every culture has typical tchotchkes that grace their homes. Something as simple as a bobble head velvet dog or a porcelain clown can be part of a person’s story. It would have to be something rooted in the things that the family admires or is fond of for some reason in some way. That object, if it holds significance and familiarity to the student, can inform the sculpture they do. Each student can bring in a few pieces of home that they have a personal affinity with and select which one could combine with things that they have absorbed from the visual world around them. It could be their favorite tv show character or a hero from a book. They could bring in images or even objects that represent that influence and reflect on why those are significant. Once that is determined the students can create sketches based of what they want to create by taking from both pieces, treating each one like an artifact of their life. The construction and medium would be determined by the length allotted for the lesson and the materials available. I made mine out of ceramics but it could easily be a collage piece or

multimedia sculpture. By sharing their work with the class they could share why those artifacts were significant to them and bring some of their personal insights to the class.

Using the “Pueblo Self Portrait” as a model, I could ask students to create a personal portrait. The foundation of the project would be portraiture but the elements that inform the way it looks could be taken from culture, place or experience of their own lives. The piece could be clay but could also simply be a profile with the elements that are significant to them applied in a two dimensional media.

The “Hacienda Façade” could also be easily translated. Each person has a dwelling but what that is and what it looks like is drastically different. For example, if a student is homeless or in foster care they may only view a room or a space as their home. In my piece I depicted an idyllic place but it could be a lot more interesting to depict what is real. Not everyone lives in a nice house so the definition of what home is to each person would be based on their experience. Now, students could easily feel shame if they don’t measure up to their peers so I would expand the definition of home or what is characteristic of the neighborhood they live in. Whether the place was of an apartment or a couch the student can choose what they define as home and what they choose to share with the class.

The “Arrival” piece is a documentation of my coming from one country to another. However, the students’ pieces could simply reflect different journeys that include both the physical and emotional. Again, the project leaves the door open for the student to share about themselves but is broad enough so that the student doesn’t feel forced to share something that may be painful. I believe when students begin to share a little of what is important to them it gives them a chance to be vulnerable in a safe space of the art classroom. This piece could be in ceramic but could also be a linoleum cut piece or a painting using the same themes.



The “Synthesis” quilt has several ways it could be adapted to the art classroom. The students could share an event or give a criticism (like in the original Arpilleras) on one square of cloth or paper to woven together with the rest of the class to form a class-wide story telling quilt. It could also be used in the way I used it and make a visual document about the body of work they have been making all year. They could pull from those things that influenced their work all semester long and have a chance to reflect on what they’ve made and what they have learned and shared with each other in the class.

### **Conclusion**

Going forward I want to teach lessons that can speak to the diverse group of students I have. Going through my own process has given me the confidence and insight needed to frame my projects in such a way that they promote dialogue and create a space where students can appreciate what each other’s differences and be enriched by them. Designing a curriculum or sharing this information as a publishable article would be the next natural step to this study but goes beyond the scope of this thesis. Perhaps in future I will pursue these opportunities.

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